

**REMARKS**

Entry of the foregoing amendments and reconsideration of this application are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

**Claims 7, 9-12, 14, 15 and 22-33**

Claims 7, 9-12, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,338,739 to Datta et al. (“Datta”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,833,651 to Donovan et al. (“Donovan”) or U.S. Patent No. 5,788,979 to Alt et al. (“Alt”). Claims 7, 9-12, 14 and 15 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,766,209 to Devonec (“Devonec”) in view of Donovan. The rejections were set forth by the Examiner in the Final Office Action dated September 18, 2007. The Examiner rejected the Applicant’s arguments for patentability in the Advisory Action dated December 4, 2007. While the Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner’s rejections, in order to advance prosecution, the claims have been amended.

***Independent claim 7 and its dependent claims are allowable***

Independent claim 7 as amended recites “...a connecting segment disposed between the first and second segments and coupling together the first and second segments, the connecting segment being a solid member...” The Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references (including Datta, Donovan, Alt and Devonec), alone or in proper combination, do not disclose or suggest a stent as recited by independent claim 7. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 7, and its dependent claims, are patentable.

***Independent claim 24 and its dependent claims are allowable***

Newly added independent claim 24 recites "... a connecting segment disposed between the first and second segments and coupling together the first and second segments, the connecting segment being devoid of a lumen...." The Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references (including Datta, Donovan, Alt and Devonec), alone or in proper combination, do not disclose or suggest a stent as recited by independent claim 24. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 24, and its dependent claims, are patentable.

**CONCLUSION**

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been traversed or rendered moot. The Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that such rejections be withdrawn. The Applicant believes that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that further personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

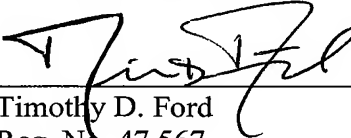
The Director is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees under 37 CFR 1.16, 1.17, and 1.21 that may be required by this paper, and to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-1283.

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Respectfully submitted,  
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